

Businessman angered about city paving plan

April 07, 2004

By: Stephen Mercer

Concerned about the effect a new sidewalk would have on the amount of parking and safety of his building, a Grand Coulee man disputed part of the city's plan to repair Burdin Boulevard.

Milt Snyder does not want a sidewalk placed in front of an alley that runs beside and behind the west end of his Burdin Boulevard building.

The sidewalk would cut off nine planned parking spots behind the building, he told the city council and Mayor Tammara Byers last night.

The estimated \$273,000 project will be paid for by a state Transportation Improvement Board grant.

The sidewalk would end the head-in parking in front of the building and require people to parallel park. Byers said parallel parking is a city law that's not been enforced.

She said the city would maintain an alley that stretches along Burdin Boulevard

Snyder said the parallel parking and sidewalk would take away two-thirds of his parking space, which often sits full during the day.

He said he could also lose the building's tenants - dentist Lawrence Rehn, Chiropractor Russell Barnings and Okanogan Regional Home Health & Hospice.

Byers said engineering firm Gray and Osborne determined in preliminary engineering work that the alley posed a traffic problem and the sidewalk would provide proper draining.

She said the city must follow the preliminary plans to keep the TIB grant.

But Snyder said that at a public meeting on the project on March 10, Gray and Osborne Engineer Jeff Stevens said he could choose between the alley on the west side and a much narrower one on the east side.

He added that a driveway would provide the same drainage as a sidewalk on the slope.

Snyder said his option was changed to only the east side without his knowledge. He said after finding out, he tried to get information for 10 days.

Byers said she received a letter from Stevens yesterday that stated no changes will be made to the sidewalk. She said she planned to send Snyder the letter today and handed him a copy last night.

Grand Coulee Fire Chief Rick Paris said he heard Stevens mention the option of keeping the alley open at the meeting, as well. He said he remembers Stevens referring to a PUD box, which is located on the west end of the building.

Paris said, as the city's fire chief, he's opposed to closing the wider alley, which the city could use to fight fires in the back of the building.

Snyder said the other side is too narrow for a fire truck, garbage truck or any other large vehicles to get through.

Byers said she would look into it, but did not want to lose the TIB grant because of it.

"I wouldn't think anyone would want to put someone out of business because of a grant," Snyder said. State money originates from businesses and the city wouldn't want to lose that money, he said.

Councilmember Mick Palanuk said the city should give it another look.

©The Star of Grand Coulee 2004

The News Tribune - Tacoma, WA

Tuesday, April 13, 2004

[< Back to Regular Story Page](#)

Highway 7 backers want more

EIJIRO KAWADA; The News Tribune

After a dozen years of planning, the state is ready to begin improvement projects this summer on Highway 7 through Parkland and Spanaway.

This major highway, locally known as Pacific Avenue South, isn't pedestrian-friendly. People often try to cross the five-lane road and get trapped in the center turn lane. Drivers pull in and out of the highway pretty much wherever they want to.

"It's a mess of traffic," said Parkland resident Jennifer Wamboldt. "It doesn't allow pedestrian access to any of the economic centers."

The \$9.5 million safety improvement project will add sidewalks, bike lanes, streetlights, storm water drainage and a new traffic signal system on a five-mile section of the highway between 112th Street East in Parkland and 188th Street East, near the Roy Y.

Such improvements sound like something everybody in the area would be excited about. However, many residents and businesses say now is not the time to do them.

The critics are not opposed to the project, but they say the project doesn't go far enough to make the corridor attractive. With more money, Highway 7 could turn into something more desirable, they say.

"I think the community prefer the project be held off so that there would be money for additional amenities," Wamboldt said.

Local elected officials are working to find an additional \$3.2 million to plant trees, install pedestrian lights and put in curbs and gutters. If the additional money is available, the improvement project might be delayed.

"Right now, pavement goes right to the front doors," said Troy Cowan, project engineer for the state Department of Transportation.

Compared with similar-sized highways in Washington, Highway 7 is labeled as one of the most dangerous in the state, said Jeff Moore, operations review engineer for the DOT.

While the state average accident rate for an urban principal arterial is 2.56 accidents per 1 million vehicle-miles traveled, Highway 7's is 6.41, Moore said. Also, the average daily traffic count for the roadway just north of the Roy Y intersection has nearly doubled in the past two decades, from 20,300 vehicles a day in 1983 to 39,000 in 2002.

Yet, businesses also are willing to wait on the improvement project, said Paul Ellis, director for metropolitan development for the Tacoma Pierce County Chamber of Commerce.

"If we don't do it right, then we'd be foreclosing the potential for the highway for the next 20 years," he said.

If the state carries out the project as scheduled, it would be much more expensive later on to come back and add amenities, Ellis said. Without the additional improvements, it would be difficult to attract large investment to the sprawling Parkland-Spanaway corridor, he said.

A state gas tax increase of five cents per gallon that went into effect last year will pay for the current \$9.5 million project. The last upgrade made to the highway was in the 1960s when it was widened from three lanes to five, said Pierce County Councilwoman Barbara Gelman, whose district includes Parkland and Spanaway.

Gelman too favors putting in additional amenities alongside the state's project. She is working with the state, hoping to win a

\$1.2 million grant from the state Transportation Investment Board and \$1.9 million in the state's transportation budget next year.

Gelman said she probably will know in the next 30 days whether the project would receive the additional grant money.

"This is a critical time right now," Gelman said. Highway 7 "is an important link to Frederickson, the port (of Tacoma) and economic development of the area."

Eijiro Kawada: 253-597-8633
eijiro.kawada@mail.tribnet.com


How to get involved

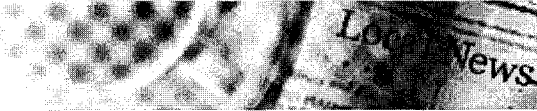
•Troy Cowan, the state DOT project engineer for Highway 7 improvements, will visit the monthly meeting of the Parkland Community Association today. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Rainier View Christian Church, 12305 Spanaway Loop Road.

(Published 12:01AM, April 12th, 2004)

General Info: Privacy Policy | User Agreement | Contact Us

The Interactive Media Division of The News Tribune © 2004 Tacoma News, Inc.
1950 South State Street, Tacoma, Washington 98405 253-597-8742
Fax Machines: Newsroom, 253-597-8274 Advertising, 253-552-7042
Send comments to the Webmaster at webmaster@tribnet.com.

Tacoma News, Inc. is a subsidiary of The McClatchy Company 



[News](#)
[Classifieds](#)
[Community](#)
[Directory](#)
[Shopping](#)
[My Zwire!](#)

Home -> News -> News -> Top Stories

Thursday 15 April, 2004

News

[Top Stories](#)
[Weather Forecast](#)
[Current Local](#)
[Weather](#)
[Schools](#)
[Sports](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Community News](#)
[Police/Courts](#)
[Opinion](#)

Lifestyles

Classifieds

Business

Directory

Our Newspaper

Personal Finance

Advanced News

Search

Top Stories

Burdin Boulevard sidewalk alternative sought

By: Stephen Mercer

April 14, 2004

A planned sidewalk on Burdin Boulevard continues to elicit strong feelings from a Grand Coulee building owner and his tenants as the start of construction draws near.

Lack of parking, water seeping into buildings and space for emergency vehicles are some of the topics Burdin Boulevard building owner Milt Snyder and his tenants are concerned about with the planned reconstruction of the street approaching.

The estimated \$243,000 project will add new sidewalks, drainage, new pavement and more on the street from highway 174 to near 2nd Street. It's paid for by a Transportation Improvement Board grant under the state's Small City Program.

TIB is scheduled to approve the plans on April 23. Bids for the construction job are scheduled to be opened May 13. The chosen firm will be announced on May 18. Work is scheduled to begin in June.

But several complaints prompted Mayor Tammara Byers to make Burdin Boulevard the main topic of the April 20 city council meeting. She said Grey and Osborne Engineer Jeff Stevens will be there to take public comments about the plans and for any possible changes to the street.

The majority of the opposition comes from a plan to build a sidewalk four feet from the current one along both sides of the street.

At the April 6 Grand Coulee Council meeting, Snyder said the sidewalk would cost him parking. That's because a city law previously not enforced requires parallel parking alongside the sidewalk.

It would also cut off access to an alley that runs along the west side of his building into the back where nine parking spots have been made.

Snyder said the buildings' tenants use the back area for parking and loading. The head-in parking in front is used for the tenant's clients and overflow parking from Coulee Community Hospital and other nearby buildings.

Building the sidewalk would cut off most of his parking, he said. Snyder said he had been not notified of the upcoming council meeting when

contacted by The Star Monday. Although he's not sure if he's attending, he said they are stretching the issue of the driveway out too much.

"Either do it or not," Snyder said.

Snyder said he has begun some legal action for possible litigation in the future. He said he contacted Moses Lake attorney Harold Moberg for a title run to see what's on the property.

He also plans on hiring a surveyor to find out whether he or the city owns the property they plan to build the sidewalk on.

The conflict began at a March 2 public forum meeting. Snyder said he was told he could keep part of the driveway that runs alongside the west side and into the back of the building open.

There's a PUD box on the west side that separates the driveway. He said he could choose to keep either the wider side of the box open or the narrower east side of the box open.

The city later changed the plan to build the sidewalk over the entire driveway without notifying him, he says.

He said he found out when he went to talk to project engineer Paul Soboleski about drainage. Snyder said he looked at a map and saw they planned to install a sidewalk in front of the west side of the building.

The plans showed that could only keep the driveway open on the east side, which Snyder said is too narrow and he plans to close off. She said the sidewalk is blocking the driveway there because of safety considerations. Byers said drivers with long trailers turning from highway 174 into the Burdin Boulevard building pose a risk with the trailer slightly sticking into the highway.

Snyder disputes that. He said drivers can easily enter and leave the building without an accident.

And if they keep it a driveway, the water would drain down the slope from the highway just as well as a sidewalk, he said. He believes the unexpected change was due to his family name. Snyder said the hard feelings the city has with his father, Matt, and brother Wayne led to the plan changes.

Wayne Snyder is the only landowner to not provide an easement for the pipeline to connect water between Electric City's water supply and Grand Coulee. Matt Snyder has been fined several times in an effort by the city to force him to make his Midway Avenue property, the M and M Trailer Sales lot, into compliance with the city's nuisance ordinance.

Grand Coulee Mayor Tammara Byers strongly denied Milt Snyder's claim. She said the sidewalks in front of the building are part of the specifications for the street's improvement to ensure the city receives the TIB grant.

"I'm sorry Mr. Snyder feels that way, " she said of his claims the changes were due to his name. "It has nothing to do with this." But he's not the only one connected to the building that opposes the current plan.

Chiropractor Russell Barnings, a tenant at the building, said cutting off the street would make it hard for emergency vehicles to maneuver behind the

building.

In addition, the new sidewalk is higher than the threshold of the building, he said. After a heavy rain or snow melt, the water would seep into the buildings and damage the interiors.

The city's trying to satisfy the government and they are not taking into consideration the local community, Barnings said.

He said he has no problem with a city upgrade, "but turning a blind eye to local taxpayers and business is foolish."

"I don't think it's been well thought out," Barnings said. He would consider leaving if the sidewalk is put in.


When asked about the Burdin Boulevard affecting businesses, Byers said the city is business friendly. She said a nice street with sidewalks and drainage encourages businesses.

Snyder plans to convert a grass field on the east of the building into a parking lot, as well. Its a \$10,000 to \$15,000 project, he said, but the building's occupants and their clients need the parking.

©The Star of Grand Coulee 2004

Reader Opinions

Be the first person to voice your opinion on this story!

Back to top 



E-mail this story
to a friend



Voice your opinion
on this story

Send us your community news, events, letters to the editor and other suggestions. Now, you can submit birth, wedding and engagement announcements online too!

Copyright © 1995 - 2004 PowerOne Media, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

City gambles on highway study

By Marina Parr

It's a \$107,000 gamble.

But Oak Harbor city officials say pulling money from the city's traffic-impact fund to pay for engineering and design studies of the city's most congested stretch of Highway 20 is worth the financial risk. The study, which will focus on the section of highway that runs from Beeksma Drive to Swantown Road, is the first step in persuading the state to pay to fix the road.

The estimated price tag for constructing an additional lane both north and south, purchasing right-of-ways and making other improvements could run at least \$4 million, according to city officials.

Still, there's no guarantee that after the city pays for its portion of the study, the highway will be improved any time soon — if at all.

Right now, the project isn't on the state Department of

Transportation's priority list. But city officials and those involved with transportation issues say it's a good idea to do the design studies now as a way to entice state officials to complete the job later.

"Generally, it's a chicken-and-egg game," said Todd Carlson, planning and operations manager with the state's Department of Transportation office in Burlington. "If you don't know what you need, how can you persuade the Legislature to pay for it?"

Or as Steve Powers, Oak Harbor development services director, put it at a recent City Council meeting: "This plan will help us get their attention on this project."

All together, the design

study is expected to cost about \$150,000.

The city's money comes from traffic impact fees. Those fees are paid to the city by businesses to compensate for increased traffic flow. For instance, Whidbey Island Bank's new headquarters, at the corner of Erie Drive and Highway 20, netted the city \$47,000.

A state Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) grant of close to \$45,000 also will pay for the engineering study.

Indeed, officials from the city engineering and planning departments warned City Council members that the transportation improvement board grant was in danger of being yanked if the city did not begin spending the money awarded several years ago.

Originally, city officials were focused on a far smaller section of Highway 20. They wanted to add another traffic lane to the

northbound section of the road, between Erie and Beeksma Drive.

The area is considered a choke point as traffic makes a sharp turn south toward Coupeville, and north through the heart of Oak Harbor's

commercial corridor. The traffic light near Schuck's Auto Supply affords several options, including turning left and continuing up the highway, heading straight to Oak Harbor's downtown along Pioneer Way, or turning right on Beeksma, toward the southern entrance of Oak Harbor's City Beach park.

But to arrive at that light, motorists are limited to one northbound lane, with several left-hand turn refuges to get to other businesses. Widening this section of road would have allowed for an easier traffic flow, but it would have done nothing to help motorists moving up the hill past Albertson's, where the highway suddenly constricts from two lanes to one.

Ultimately, city officials said both segments of the highway need to be fixed for traffic to move smoothly.

As it stands, an average 19,000 motorists pass north and south along this stretch of Highway 20 each day.

State transportation officials agree that this segment of Highway 20 is congested and troublesome.

But they also note that money for state highway projects is in short supply.

Some of that financial shortfall eased last fall when the Legislature passed a gas tax of a nickel per gallon. But that money was quickly absorbed by more pressing transportation projects approved by the Legislature, said the DOT's Carlson.

One of those projects, which will widen the rest of Highway 20 to four lanes between Anacortes and Interstate 5, has been sitting on an engineer's shelf for the better part of a decade, Carlson said.

"We've been chasing funding for 10 years," he said of the \$90-plus million project being funded by the nickel gas tax.

Motorists also pay another 23 cents per gallon of gas, as part of an ongoing gas tax. Half of that money goes to the state's transportation department. The other half goes directly to cities and counties, as well as grant programs such as the Transportation Improvement Board, which focuses on urban areas such as Oak Harbor.

Transportation officials say despite gas-guzzling SUVs, overall, most cars are much more fuel efficient these days, meaning the state takes in far less in fuel taxes, even as more cars hit the highway.

Also, due to inflation, the buying power of that tax has dropped. "Our revenue stream is so small," Carlson said. "It's getting less and less every year."

That means road projects are addressed first for safety reasons, and second to shore up existing roadways that are crumbling or otherwise falling apart.

On Whidbey Island, the state is spending about \$60 million to fix numerous unsafe intersections along more rural stretches of Highway 20 from Deception Pass to Sidney Road.

Mayor outlines plans for city

By: Stephen Mercer

April 21, 2004

With a new water source, fire truck, street and a renewed pursuit of the nuisance ordinance, there's a lot happening in the city of Grand Coulee this year

With a new water source, fire truck, street and a renewed pursuit of the nuisance ordinance, there's a lot happening in the city of Grand Coulee this year.

Grand Coulee Mayor Tammara Byers attended the Grand Coulee Dam Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon last Thursday to describe the changes. She talked about the Burdin Boulevard construction, the new class "A" fire engine for the city's volunteer fire department, the water sharing project with the town of Electric City and the nuisance ordinance.

The project will connect a pipeline from Electric City's water supply to Grand Coulee. A ceremony to commemorate the beginning of the construction of the intertie is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. tomorrow, April 22, at North Dam Park. Byers said the pipeline will run the back way through Delano. So traffic in Grand Coulee and Electric City should not be affected during construction, she said.

The new water source will drop homeowner's insurance rates throughout the city as well, she said.

The project's necessary to satisfy the federal Safe Water Drinking Act. The act allows Grand Coulee to use Electric City's water without filtration because its in an underground aquifer.

Byers said using the aquifer will keep residents' operating costs lower than Coulee Dam's. Coulee Dam was required to build an approximately \$4.8 million slow sand filtration plant and operate it since they don't have an underground source of water and must use surface water.

She said the intertie also helps Electric City, which will receive payments for the use of water and for improving wells and pumps.

"We're all going to benefit from this," Byers said.

The water sharing comes after the city spent almost 20 years saying no to the federal government's request to comply with the act, Byers said. As a result, she said, Grand Coulee is now one of two or three cities not to comply. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent trying to find a water source in Grand Coulee's boundaries, but no aquifer with enough volume was found, she said.

Upon deciding on Electric City's aquifer, a couple high-volume pumping tests were run that showed the aquifer could meet the demand of Grand Coulee's water.

Byers said the Burdin Boulevard street project will lead to proper sidewalks and storm drains.

The estimated \$243,000 project, financed by a state Transportation Improvement Board grant, will lead to new sidewalks, storm drains and a repaved road from highway 174 to 2nd Street.

The Burdin Boulevard work has been scheduled to begin in June.

The need for sidewalks has been disputed by a couple businesses on the street. They are opposed to the sidewalks requiring parallel parking cutting off access to other parking.

Byers said the city plans to begin strictly enforcing the city's nuisance ordinance again, including some outstanding citations.

The nuisance ordinance enforces the city's standards for property.

Byers also mentioned the city's new class "A" fire engine. The approximately \$283,000 engine was delivered to the city April 5.

South Sound

Lacey officials get look at new stretch of road

LISA PEMBERTON THE OLYMPIAN

Lacey city and school officials had a sneak peek Monday night of what a half-mile stretch along Mullen Road near Timberline High School and Lakes Elementary School eventually could look like: three lanes with a landscaping strip, sidewalks and a bike lane.

Now, the section of narrow road gets congested when parents, students and schoolbuses are trying to turn out of either school onto the busy road. Several wrecks along the road have occurred when school parking lots overflow and cars park on the shoulder.

"That particular section of Mullen Road is in desperate need of full improvement," Dennis Ritter, the city's Public Works director told city and school officials during a joint work session.

During the meeting, Ritter announced that the Mullen Road widening project, which is being planned by city, school and Intercity Transit officials, recently received confirmation of a \$2.5 million grant from the state's Transportation Improvement Board.

In addition to state money, the school district will pay \$900,000, and Lacey has committed \$1.2 million.

No roundabouts were in the architectural sketches presented during the joint work session. But some people at the meeting joked that there's still time to incorporate some of the modern Lacey-style landmarks into the design.

Ritter said the changes will help improve pedestrian and traffic safety.

The project is scheduled to be ready for bids by next spring, and under construction next summer.

Ritter stressed that school and city officials need to continue working closely together, especially as the district plans capital projects such as parking lots and other building projects at Timberline High School and Lakes Elementary School.

The city council and school board members meet twice-a-year to discuss areas of mutual concern, such as transportation and safety.

During Monday's meeting, officials talked about the Mullen Road widening project and the impact that the federal No Child Left Behind Act has had on local schools.

The groups also heard a presentation on community diversity issues by Andrew Griffin of the Thurston Community Network.

Lisa Pemberton covers education for The Olympian. She can be reached at 360-754-5445 or at lpembert@olympia.gannett.com.

Compromise possible in boulevard debate

By: Stephen Mercer

April 29, 2004

A contested major street project plan to close off part of the entrance to a Burdin Boulevard building in Grand Coulee could change.

Only allow driveway if grant not jeopardized

A contested major street project plan to close off part of the entrance to a Burdin Boulevard building in Grand Coulee could change.

On the advice of Councilmember Mick Palanuk, the city will research keeping the entire driveway on the west side of the building owned by Milt Snyder open. If that happens, one side would be used for entering the driveway and one side would be used for exiting.

However, Palanuk said if any possibility exists that leaving the driveway open jeopardizes the \$243,000 state grant for the work, then it should not be an option.

The Transportation Improvement Board grant pays for new sidewalks, storm drains, repaving, new driveways for the street's homes and more for the stretch of Burdin Boulevard from highway 174 to Second Street.

As of Tuesday, the city's project engineers are discussing the change with various agencies, Mayor Tamara Byers said. She said the city plans to make a proposal to Snyder when a decision is made.

Palanuk made the suggestion after hearing comments from Snyder, chiropractor Russell Barnings, a building tenant, and veterinarian Dave Winzer, whose clinic is located behind the building, all attended the April 20 city council meeting.

They are all opposed to the sidewalk plan, which would take away head-in parking and require parallel parking in front of the building.

Snyder said the sidewalk takes away too much parking to the building and would lead to damage on the building's side and prevent emergency vehicles from reaching the back of the building because of its narrowness.

"It's stupid," Snyder said. "I can't believe you people can't figure that out."

He said he could lose tenants, as well. Besides Barnings, Dentist Lawrence Rehn and Okanogan Regional Home Health & Hospice rent offices in the building.

The city is still business friendly, Byers said when told the project could lead to businesses leaving. She said a nice street with drainage and sidewalks encourages businesses.

Byers said the city's fighting a trivial argument and pointed out Coulee Community Hospital will also lose parking.

Snyder said he disagreed with the view that accidents can be caused by people

entering and exiting the west side of the building.

Byers said people will adjust to the changes and "we will make it work."

She said although there haven't been any accidents yet, there could be one.

Barnings said if they require parallel parking, his patients, who often have

physical problems, must leave their vehicles and walk into the street.

That could lead to an accident from oncoming traffic, since they can't move quickly, he said.

Winzer said the blocked driveway would prevent large trailers from accessing the veterinary building through the back. Using another, smaller entrance and exit, such as A Street, could lead to accidents with a trailer trying to maneuver to the building, he said.

Snyder said by keeping the driveway open, tenants and customers could

access the back of the building and away from traffic, where he has installed nine parking strips. He said the building's occupants and their patients could park there and delivery trucks could easily access the building.

Large trailer trucks could still access the veterinary clinic, as well.

Project Engineer Paul Soboloski of Gray and Osborn, attended the meeting to explain the project and answer questions. He said there will be eight-foot wide spots for parallel parking on each side of the street with a 24-foot wide road when the renovations are finished.

Other changes for the street are improved driveways for the street's residents and a drainage system for Coulee Community Hospital and Snyder's property. Soboloski said a sidewalk placed in front of the building would ensure more safety for drivers entering and leaving the building and give the city the best chance of approval for the project.

The sidewalk and other street designs are based on state Dept. of

Transportation guidelines, which factors in speed, safety, line of sight and distance from the highway.

Byers said the city used the DOT guidelines because it was their best chance to receive the TIB grant. She said it's the city's first TIB grant and she doesn't want to lose it.

The proposed plan would allow drivers to enter the building on the east side and exit on a portion of the west side.

An opening on the east side of the building could stay open for traffic to turn in. A part of the driveway on the west side could stay open for counter-clockwise

circulation of vehicles, Soboloski said.

He then gave two options for exiting vehicles.

If the portion of driveway between a Grant County Public Utility Box and the building is left open, then traffic could turn right and left, he said.

If the area between the PUD box and the other end of the driveway, which lies closer to the highway, is used, drivers must turn right from the building.

Soboloski said he would recommend the city put in a median restrictive barrier if that side stays open to prevent people from turning left.

The six- to eight-inch median would have reflectors on it and would be paid for with the grant.

He also said the plan allows enough space for large vehicles to access the building and the vet clinic.

Grand Coulee Fire Chief Rick Paris disagreed with the median. He said

although its unlikely keeping the driveway open would cause an accident, he guaranteed a median would, especially in the winter with the slick roads.

The city council also disliked the idea of the median. Soboloski said it's only a recommendation, not a requirement.

Neither of the plans may happen, though, because Snyder said he plans to close the entry to the east side of the building, because several large trucks have hit hitting the side of the building.

And even if Palanuk's proposal is approved, there will be changes.